

■ DISPUTE

# Health risk as garbage piles up in Marikana

*Refuse not collected for months*

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HEAPS of blue garbage plastic bags with overflowing rubbish have become a normal sight in the Marikana informal settlement in Philippi, as refuse has not been collected for months.

The problem started when the City withdrew its refuse collection services in the area – as well as in Kanana informal settlement in Gugulethu and Europe informal settlement, Nyanga – in August, due to employment disputes with residents.

Residents, fed-up with living in stinking, rodent infested conditions, are now demanding that community leaders and the City come to an agreement. Marikana resident, Abongile Ngcobo, said: “The smell is unbearable, there are fleas and maggots coming out of the rubbish, and children are getting itchy rashes. This has been ongoing for about three months.

“The councillor had arranged for a truck to clean up along Sheffield Road on October 17. However, the problem is inside the informal settlement, not at the road.”

Nomzamo Mavalantiya, who sells braai meat, said she was worried about hygiene and losing her customers.

Community leader Madiekielitso Dirubo said: “The contract ended in August, and when the City employed people again via its database, it only

deployed a few, meaning the operations were short-staffed. We also found out it had employed people who weren't from the community, while others had relocated. Residents provided the City with a list of names of people who lived in the area to do the job and it was rejected.”

Earlier this month more than 100 residents, supported by the Social Justice Coalition marched to the City's Fezeka Centre in Gugulethu demanding the City explain the process for employing cleaners, as well as its cleaning plan.

Mayco member for urban management Grant Twigg said leaders in some informal settlements prevented the City from cleaning their communities.

“The City will continue to engage with the affected communities in the interest of the health and safety of our residents.

“Some leaders are unhappy and are attempting to interfere in the employment processes of the City's Extended Public Works Programme. The job seekers database is the only method that will be used to employ workers by the contractor.

“We urge the leadership to allow a clean-up of the areas to take place, while we continue to engage and resolve the issues.

“A session with all community leaders will be scheduled to address challenges,” said Twigg.